References

Wolf Ridge



Uponor involvement

Project highlights

- K-12 environmental learning center renovations
- 360 ft. of Uponor Ecoflex

Uponor solutions

- Uponor Ecoflex with corrugated HDPE jacket

An environmental learning center renovates its campus with a new sustainability program

Founded in 1971, Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center in Finland, Minn. was the first environmental learning center nationally accredited as a K-12 school. More than 15,000 people all over the region stay at the facility for several days to immerse themselves in developing the knowledge, skills, motivation and commitment to create a quality environment.

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Project Facts:

Location	Completion
Finland, MN, USA	1996

Building Type

K-12

Project Type

Renovation

Back in 1996, the team at Wolf Ridge chose an Uponor Ecoflex pre-insulated pipe system to heat and cool their facility. With new renovations taking place, Wolf Ridge once again turned to Uponor for Ecoflex thermal twin PEX pipes to help complete the job. The facility is currently the first organization in Minnesota pursing full certification for Living Building Challenge (LBC), a program, advocacy tool and philosophy that defines the most advanced measure of sustainability. Therefore, choosing sustainable products was absolutely essential.

''We referred to LBC's Red List chemical guide when choosing our products for the renovation,'' explained Pete Smerud, executive director at Wolf Ridge. ''The Red List is a list of products that are deemed bad for the environment and human health. PEX pipes are not on that list, but CPVC and PVC pipes are. One of the greatest things about Uponor is they know their products' ingredients because they manufacture the products themselves.''

The project came with a unique challenge because there was a thick layer of bedrock where the Ecoflex was to be installed. This meant there was less soil than desired and Jamar Company, the plumbing contractor, had to be extra careful with the installation.

''Even with this challenge, the installers were pleased with the PEX installation in comparison to rigid pipe,'' said Smerud. ''They just dug the trench and flopped the Ecoflex in, thanks to the flexibility of the pipe.''

Because of the quick installation, the crew was able to install 300 ft. of PEX pipe a day.

''I give Uponor Ecoflex two thumbs up,'' added Smerud. ''Truly, I have no concerns because it's performed so flawlessly for us for years.''

Renovating and building to LBC's standards is an exciting project for Wolf Ridge. Smerud believes this project will educate everyone, from manufacturers to installers on how to better improve their processes and put more thought into how they are impacting the environment. Wolf Ridge wants to engage a whole new audience of learners to help shape the building industry in a more sustainable direction.

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> — Pete Smerud, executive director at Wolf Ridge

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